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SUBJECT: LIGHT INFANTRY BATTALION (LIB) TRAINING IN
KISANGANI: WILL ALL BE READY COME FEBRUARY 17?

1. (SBU) Summary: United States training of a Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) of the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) is scheduled to commence Wednesday, February 17, 2010. Major efforts to identify forces to conduct and support training are underway, as are efforts to contract for construction support at the Camp Base facility in Kisangani. Contracts for trainers and construction projects are either underway or nearing release to potential bidders. While these activities are moving forward, the start date looms large and many necessary activities remain to be accomplished before training can begin in earnest. End summary.

Identification of forces to provide training

2. (SBU) The Request for Forces (RFF) process for this mission has proven difficult. U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAF) succeeded in identifying and requesting forces to conduct the proposed training at Kisangani. Ongoing U.S. military operations, however, have made sourcing these requests extremely difficult. While some forces have been identified, those forces necessary to actually conduct the training are now only partially sourced. Contract trainers will round out the training force. This solution meets the requirements for the training and needs of Embassy Kinshasa. The FARDC lacks basic military training at this time. Contract trainers can provide the appropriate level of training necessary to train a light infantry battalion organization such as the battalion that will be trained at Kisangani. The request for proposals has been submitted for legal review in preparation for its release to potential bidders. Department of State contracting officers expect the process to be complete with trainers on the ground in Kisangani by 25 January 2010.

Construction of training facilities

3. (SBU) Currently, no construction activities are underway at Kisangani. NAVFAC, the contracting organization conducting construction contract competition for building projects at Kisangani is conducting site surveys at the facility and will award contracts necessary to begin construction activities in the near future. NAVFAC intends to award the initial contract to begin construction activities to a construction and engineering company located in Kisangani. Other contracts will be awarded as needed to develop the Camp Base facility to the level necessary to provide a supportable and sustainable training facility. When construction is completed, the facility will host a small arms range, work areas, living quarters for soldiers training at the facility, a housing complex for the tenant unit, dining facility, and latrine facilities as well as structures for the storage of multiple classes of supply. The USG investment in the Camp Base facility will provide the FARDC with

a facility that serves as the foundation for a Congolese national training facility for FARDC units.

¶4. (SBU) The facility will benefit both the DRC and the USG, as training is key to professionalizing the FARDC. The facility at Camp Base will benefit the Congolese and the FARDC by providing a well thought out training facility that can become a light infantry training center where FARDC units can test their capabilities in a non-kinetic environment in order to improve their capabilities for internal defense of the country. In short, the USG is providing a capacity for the FARDC vice a capability should the Ministry of Defense choose to use the facility in such a manner. The construction of a viable training facility of this type provides the USG a lever that can be used to help the GDRC move the FARDC along a path of professionalism.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: The FARDC is currently a collection of rebel groups that have been integrated into the military through various processes and has left the military as something of a dumping ground for groups with grievances against the government. Lack of training and the associated discipline that comes from training has resulted in an organization, an army in name only, that is seen as responsible for large portions of the sexual violence in the East and as a force incapable of effective combat operations. The USG should take advantage of the opportunity that the development of this type of training facility offers to assist the FARDC in improving its military through extensive and rigorous exercises in a managed environment. By training the FARDC's light infantry battalion at this facility, U.S. military personnel can aid the FARDC in understanding how training methods like those the U.S. Army uses at its national training centers build disciplined and capable

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military units that are effective in multiple environments such as conflict or humanitarian assistance. The USG must seize the opportunity and assist the FARDC to build a capacity -- the capacity to train -- vice a unit capable of effective performance in a conflict role. End comment.

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